



## Dalai Lama's nephew killed on Fla. highway walk

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PALM COAST, Fla. (AP) — The Dalai Lama's nephew was killed along a Florida coastal highway during one of his long treks to bring awareness to the Tibetan struggle for independence from China, officials said.

Jigme K. Norbu was hit after dark Monday on the side of the unlit highway by an SUV driven by a father with his 5-year-old son. The Highway Patrol accident report said Norbu, 45, was walking on the white line in the same direction as traffic, on the southbound side of a state highway that runs the length of the state's Atlantic coast.

Police released few other details. Norbu, who lived in Bloomington, Ind., and was active in a Tibetan rights group there, had started with others Monday on a Valentine's Day "Walk for Tibet" meant to cover some 300 miles from St. Augustine south to West Palm Beach, according to his group, Ambassadors For World Peace.

Norbu was dead when emergency services arrived at the scene, about 25 miles south of St. Augustine on State Highway A1A, the report said.

The SUV was driven by 31-year-old Keith R. O'Dell of Palm Coast, according to the Highway Patrol's report. O'Dell and his son were not injured and O'Dell was not charged. A phone listing for the driver could not immediately be found.

Norbu, the son of the Dalai Lama's late brother, Taktser Rinpoche, has done similar walks several other times, including one of 900 miles in 2009 from Indiana to New York.

That walk marked the 50th anniversary of the failed Tibetan rebellion against Chinese rule that resulted in the exile of his uncle, who is Tibet's top spiritual leader.

Norbu's late father was a high lama who was abbot of a monastery when the Chinese invaded. The brothers fled into exile following the 1959 uprising.

Rinpoche, who died in September 2008 at 86, was a professor of Tibetan studies at Indiana University in Bloomington while serving as the Dalai Lama's U.S. representative.

The Dalai Lama has visited Bloomington several times. The city about 50 miles southwest of Indianapolis is home to the Tibetan Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center and Kumbum Chamtsé Ling Temple.

China claims Tibet as part of its territory, but many Tibetans say Chinese rule deprives them of religious freedom. Beijing accuses the Dalai Lama of pushing for Tibetan autonomy and fomenting anti-Chinese protests.